3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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other tribes resident in the areas. It is a very difficult but fascinating task to find out which of them are typically Santal and which borrowed, as culture-loans from the neighbouring tribes, either Muṇḍà or hinduised Aboriginals.

This material aspect of Santal life is indissolubly linked up with its religious and clan features. We shall see in the forthcoming pages how the Santals invoke their gods to bless them with bumper-crops, how they seek protection for their hunting-dogs and cattle from the attack of wild animals by prayers to the deities. Thus the communal worship of the tribe has for its object the securing of good luck and avoiding bad luck for the tribe as its material background.

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One scrutinising the attendant marriage ceremonials must be struck by the fact that many of them aim at the union of the souls of the married couple along with their physical bodies. The tying of the ends of the cloths worn by the husband and the wife and their eating together, are instances on the point. Something more than this is sought after to ensure the steadfast obedience of the wife to the husband when the former eats a meal soaked in the water with which her husband's feet have been washed. 585 182

The same anxiety for the future welfare of the married couple is revealed in processes to guard the luck, and to exclude the evil omens, as by the beneficent and luck-conferring virtues of the mango-twigs in a water-pot. And we must not forget that omen-reading is the first essential of all Santal marriages. In this respect, they go so far as to marry the parties to dogs or trees to do away with the supposed evil effects of their teeth having appeared earlier in the upper gum. Nor must we overlook the fact that the married couple not only belong to each other but to the wider life of the clan and the tribe. This communion of the bride with her husband's people is ensured by the girl offering rice-beer and tooth-sticks to the bridegroom's party. And by ceremonial baths and anointing the body with turmeric paste, the Santals [777] [152] [783] [824] [787] [588] [783]

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is intended. An exorcist is called in, who chants an incantation and allows his stick to strike all over the place. It is an unseen hand which guides him to the spot where the thing was buried. Soon they dig the place and unearth the uncanny deposit made by a malignant enemy, thus counteracting the spell cast. A peculiar instance of this nature is that when a man's cow yields a very large quantity of milk, a jealous enemy may bury milk itself, with the unholy hope that the process will diminish the supply. Similarly, if it is intended to bring harm to a man's harvest, rice is buried, and if a man's death is intended, a bone may be deposited in the earth.

Luck

Belief in luck is nothing special to the Santal. He has it in common with all the Mundà tribes and the semi-Hinduised people of the Central Belt, not to speak of the caste-Hindus, many of whose superstitions have a similar flavour.

The Santals credit some persons with possessing "the luck of the threshing-floor." Those who are thus blest gather more harvest than others, and when they thresh the paddy, more of grains and less of chaff come out. This gift, however, can be 'stolen' by malignant persons and there are special methods of approaching such problems.

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777 352 Luck attached to a bed is tested in a peculiar way. The interstices between a stringed bed (*khatia*) are counted from its top to bottom, beginning with *ind*, then *cand*, then *jom*, and then *raja*, and so on till the end. If either *raja* or *cand* falls on the last space, the bed is lucky, and if either *ind* or *jom* falls on it, the bed is unlucky.

777 243 825 301 [823] In sowing millets, the luck of preserving the grains from the attack of pests is ensured in a special way. The sower wears a ring made from the scale of the *Harba* (Indian scaly ant-eater). This ring must be cut by a flint to protect its virtue; and should iron be used, it loses all its powers.[1]

Origin of Witch-Craft

754 562 That the Santals have an uncanny faith in Witch-craft is known to many, but little is known about the fact that they consider all women as potential witches, who learnt their art, or rather stole it from Maran Buru, the chief presiding deity, and how men in return learnt the craft of detecting the witches among women.

754 According to the sayings of the Santal patriarchs as we read in *Hòrkorèn Mare Hapramko Reak'*

1 Dr. Campbell's *Santali to English Dictionary*, pages 22 and 265.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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the meadow on the outskirts of the village), and there they draw rectangular compartments side by side, and in each compartment they put some adwa rice and in one compartment they put an egg of a hen. They then call the cowboys with the cattle and make the latter tread out the above figures. The cow which treads on and breaks the egg or simply smells it, is caught. They wash her feet, anoint the horns with oils and also smear vermilion on them. The idea is that the owner of the cow will have good luck. The cow is then lifted up and carried on the shoulder and put down before the *manjhi* (headman) whom the owner salutes and then all elderly men of the village. This the Santals call *Gots puja*.

On the second day in each house of the village within the cowshed the eldest member of the house performs a *puja*. In the centre of the cowshed he draws a circle and within it he puts adwa rice and paints vermilion and kills white and red fowls and sacrifices pig to *Marang Buru*, the household gods and their ancestors. All the men of the village go with their ploughyokes, battle-axes and knives to bathe. On that day no outsiders are allowed to enter the house. The Santals call this *Gora bonga puja*.

The third day they set wooden poles in the village street, a bundle of straw being tied on the top of the poles, put some flowers on the poles and also tie five pieces of bread made of powdered rice. Then a bull, after washing and smearing oil on its horns and painting vermilion on them, is tied to the pole. Then the bachelors and little boys of the village begin to drum, dance and scream so furiously that the animals becomes excited and begin to jump. To the horns of all the cows and buffaloes of the villages a piece of straw is